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BENT

True stories of Disabled Gay Men:
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POEM

by Chris Hewitt

THE ENTICING LANE

If I should be told,
suddenly and quite unceremoniously,
that I too had
The Disease and would be taken
from all this,
I would think over the years,
I had complained too much—
the phone always ringing
(lucky I was to have so many friends),
the hours of my job
(fortunate I was to have a job I liked),
the lover leaving
(ah, but he was here,
wasn't he, and in my arms
for so long?).
I should have lived in
the moment, kept a secret
corner for myself to breathe in,
allowed my life to blossom
at last—each leaf uncurling
wet with secrecy to dry
in the spring air.
I should have taken more risks—
old stick-in-the-mud that I am
—a balloon trip over the estuary;
speaking up on behalf of the
deaf-mute man at the bank
who was so rudely abused by the teller;
that antique bowl with red
peonies on it that I could
have bought in a shop in England.
But I let myself be dissuaded
by the sensible people.

I should have sought more balance—
silence/laughter,
cool shadow/hot rain,
nights drunk on someone/nights
alone with the dark's quiet watching.
I should have followed intuition
to the Nth degree and trusted it,
kept to that singular path, the enticing
lane with plush hedges, ripe fruit
and wafting scents that is always there
in the heart's eye and I could have
walked it, always prepared,
even into Death's Unknown and
still have been content, peaceful
as a child dawndreaming by open windows
before the others are up and everyone,
even the child, is wrenched into the world's
bombardment, the maelstrom of appointments
which constitutes a life.

"The Enticing Lane" first appeared in the anthology "Poets for Life: Seventy-Six Poets Respond to AIDS," Michael Klein, editor (Persea, 1989) and is reprinted here with permission of the author.

Don't wait.
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Search BENT's Contents and Archive to find more of Chris's poetry and prose.

Chris Hewitt's new chapbook, "Love's Fool," is available for $12, postpaid, from the publisher:
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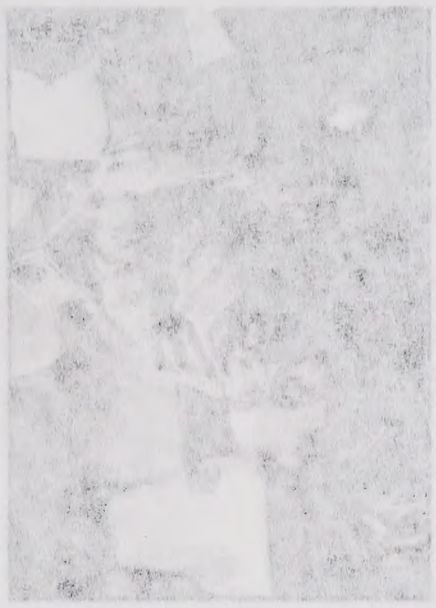
PHOTO: Richard Kanuck



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